

Appendix for Item No. 8 application no. CB/14/04511/FULL

PLANNING APPLICATION: CB/14/04511/FULL

This document and illustrations is in support of our planning application at 6 Firs Path, Leighton Buzzard.

Reason for Extension.

There is a strong possibility that an aged parent will need to be accommodated by us. We also have children, their partners and grandchildren who regularly visit together from other parts of the country. The depth of the house is quite narrow and the four existing bedrooms are of modest size.

The Design

The proposed first floor extension is above the garage, solely on the existing footprint of the property. The final design, scaled back from the original, complements the property's existing lines and elevations and creates an attractive symmetry to the other side of the house. The size of the extension is quite small in the overall context of the house. It would be perfectly in keeping with the size of the other detached houses in the cul-de-sac.

When drawing up our plans we had no thought of it being resisted by local planners, nor did anyone else we shared them with. It is the sort of extension that has been common in the surrounding area. It does not impact on our neighbours and there are no objections from them.

Area of Special Character

It appears that the objection by the planners revolve around the fact that our property is located just inside what has been designated an Area of Special Character. It is puzzling why this area is such an irregular shape, including and excluding some streets and houses for no apparent reason. It tends to suggest that the boundaries were drawn up by someone afar, with little local knowledge and in a haphazard way. Residents in excluded streets would question why their streets are not considered of equal standing if they were ever made aware of these distinctions. Why for example is the area of Heath Court excluded and the area of Redwood Glade included. It is very difficult to understand why only one house in Hillside Road is included and others considerably bigger and older are not. It is another very pleasant road. This is especially puzzling as Hillside Road is on the site of an Anglo Saxon Burial Ground. Houses which perhaps may be described as less imposing, a few yards round the corner in Plantation Road down to Adams Bottom are included. To our mind this makes for unfair inconsistencies in the treatment of different householders living a few yards from each other. How can one side of Sandy Lane be included and the other side not? Parts of Plantation road and Heath road with very attractive housing are not included. Why was recent planning permission given for a very large, incongruous house to be built in the very special Knolls Woods?

The response we have had from the planners indicate that the proximity of the proposed extension to our boundary is another reason they wish to decline it. Our

proposal is actually on the footprint of our house, no more. We understand that extensions should be no closer than 3 feet from the boundary but other considerations apply within Areas of Special Character. However, these appear to be undefined as the local case officer could not tell us a distance that it should be. Therefore, the Policy is left to individual interpretation as to whether it is acceptable or not.

Immediate Neighbours

Our proposed extension will be 6 feet away from our boundary with no. 7, twice as much as the normal 3 foot policy. It will also be 25 feet away from the first floor part of no. 7.

To put this into some sort of perspective:

1. Our neighbour's house, no.7 is at the ground floor level, 4 feet away from our boundary and on the other side of their house 3 feet away from no. 8, see illustrations 1 & 2.
2. No. 8's house abuts the boundary of no.7 and is 3 feet away from the boundary of no. 9, see illustrations 2 & 3.
3. Our other neighbour's house, no. 5, and rear balcony is 3 feet away from our boundary, see illustration 4.

Other considerations in Firs Path

The Firs was a modest bungalow until a few years ago when it was given permission for an entire new frontage, a second storey and a side ground and first floor extension, substantially increasing the size and completely changing the character of the house, see illustration 6

At the same time permission was given to put a first floor on its single storey detached garage, which now contains full living accommodation and is effectively now a dwelling with its own address, Firs Lodge. This second storey has closed in the general space and dominates the entrance to our cul-de-sac and many people think the road ends there because of it, see illustration 5.

No.4 Firs Path, semi detached house, has a first floor extension over its garage and it actually abuts the boundary of no. 5, see illustration 7.

No. 1 Firs Path, also a semi detached house, but still inside the Area of Special Character, has recently completed a first storey extension above its garage (the garage being converted into living space at the same time). This is certainly a substantial percentage increase in living space, significantly more than ours would be. More importantly the side wall is a maximum of 3 feet from its neighbour's boundary in Plantation Road, see illustration 8.

Other Developments within the Area of Special Character

If you walk around the surrounding streets within the Area of Special Character, there are numerous other houses that are much closer than our proposed 25 feet at the first floor level and are built very close if not closer than the 3 feet limit. Some of these are extensions, some have been given planning permission to be that close at outset.

Attached are photographs of just a few examples:

Plantation Road

Silver Birch, see illustration 9

Houses between Hillside Road and Adams Bottom, see illustration 10.

Redwood Glade

Nos. 42 and 43, see illustration 11

First floor garage extension, see illustration 12

Taylor's Ride

Another house a bare minimum from its neighbour, see illustration 13

Oxendon Court

Two sizeable houses built very close together, see illustration 14

Robinswood Close

Two sizeable houses built very close together, see illustration 15

Knolls Woods

A massive house totally incongruous to its surroundings, see illustration 16

Heath Park Drive

First floor garage extension, see illustration 17

Heath Road

First floor garage extension that dominates the house, see illustration 18

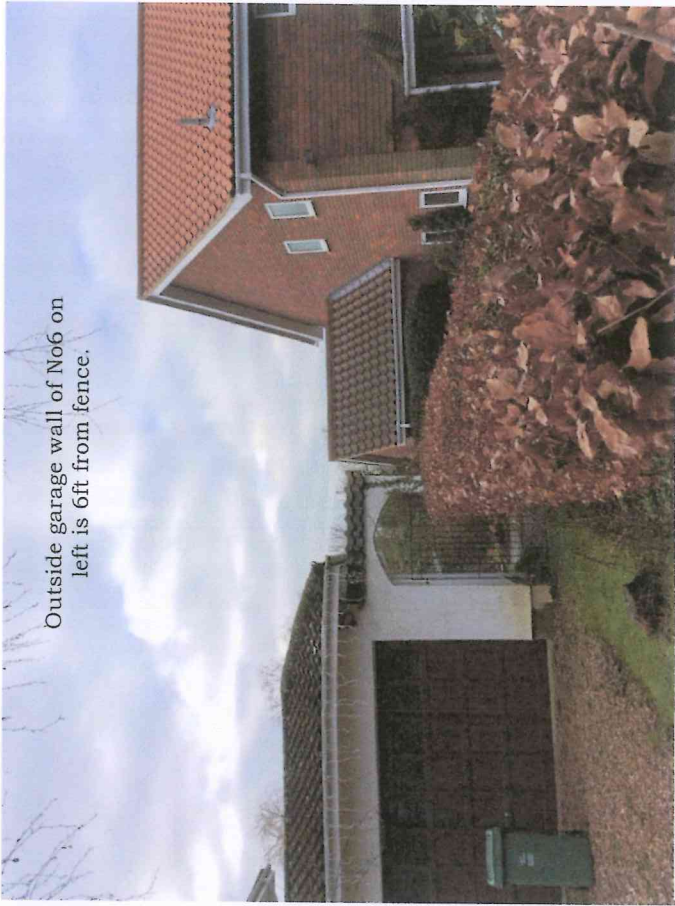
Three houses very close together, plus another first floor garage extension that dominates the house, see illustration 19

Summary

Our proposed extension is twice as far away as the “closeness” guidelines, even more so at the first floor level and will not alter the character of the house, road or general area. Even though the other houses in Firs Path are closer together, there is a feeling of spaciousness in Firs Path, and our proposal would in no way impact that feeling. We would be foolish if we were to do anything that changed the character of the road.

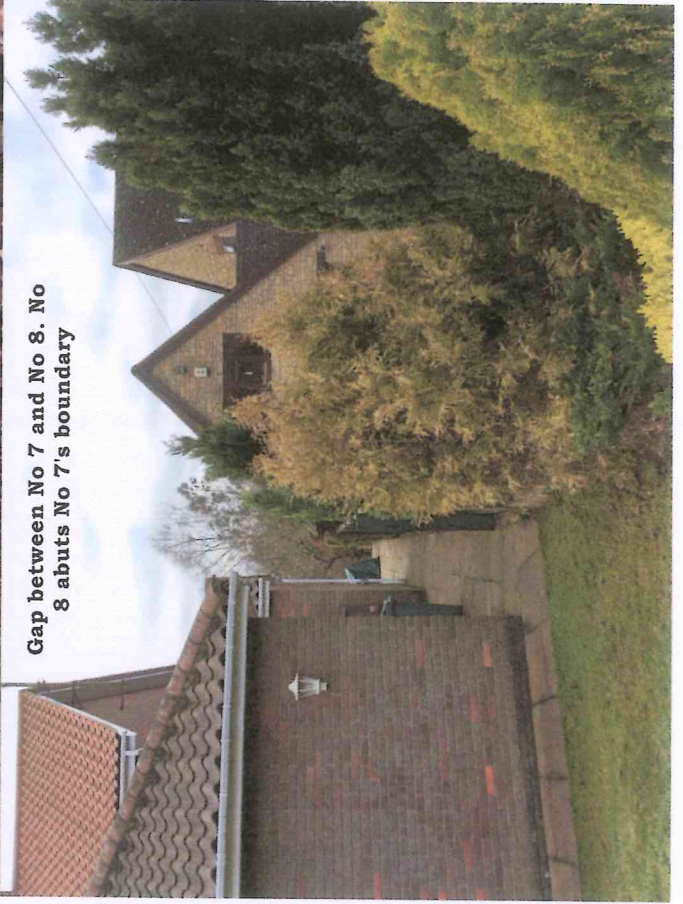
There are numerous examples of houses in the Area of Special Character that are much closer than ours will be. Recent examples of development within a few hundred yards of our property yet just outside this arbitrary Area of Special Character leave a lot more pertinent questions to be asked. We see no reason why we should be treated any differently from our neighbours and surrounding householders and be unreasonably and unjustly discriminated against. We ask that the proposal be accepted.

1.



Outside garage wall of No6 on left is 6ft from fence.

2.



Gap between No 7 and No 8. No 8 abuts No 7's boundary



No 8 just 3 ft from no. 9's wall

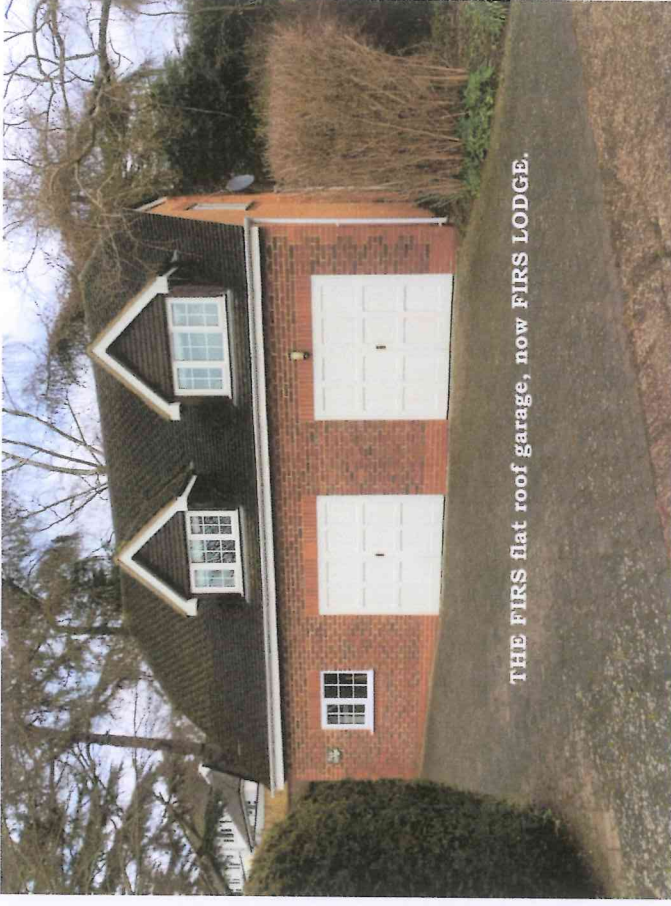


No 5 on left, just 3 feet from boundary with no. 6.

3.

4.

5



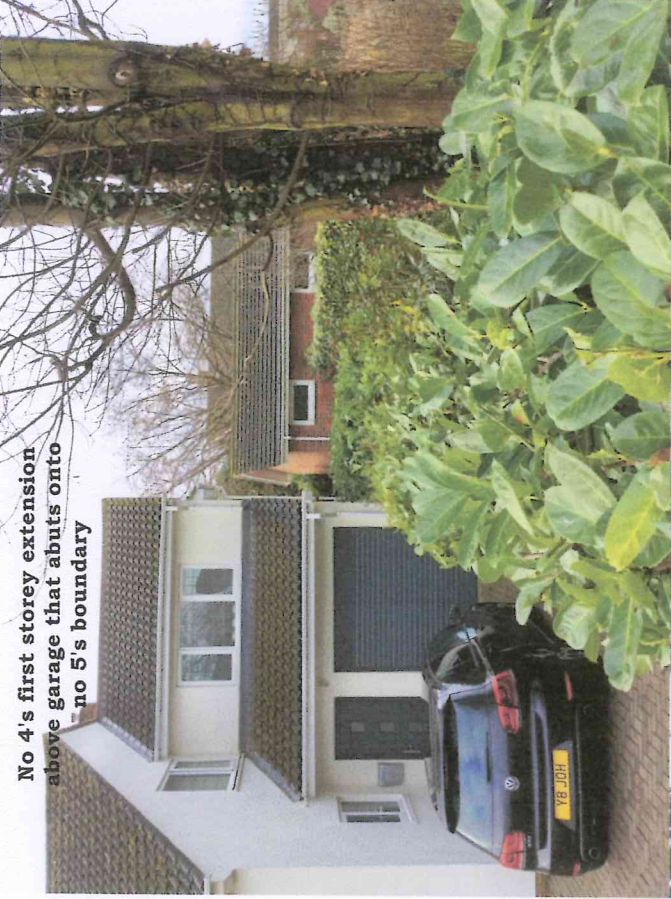
THE FIRS flat roof garage, now FIRS LODGE.

6

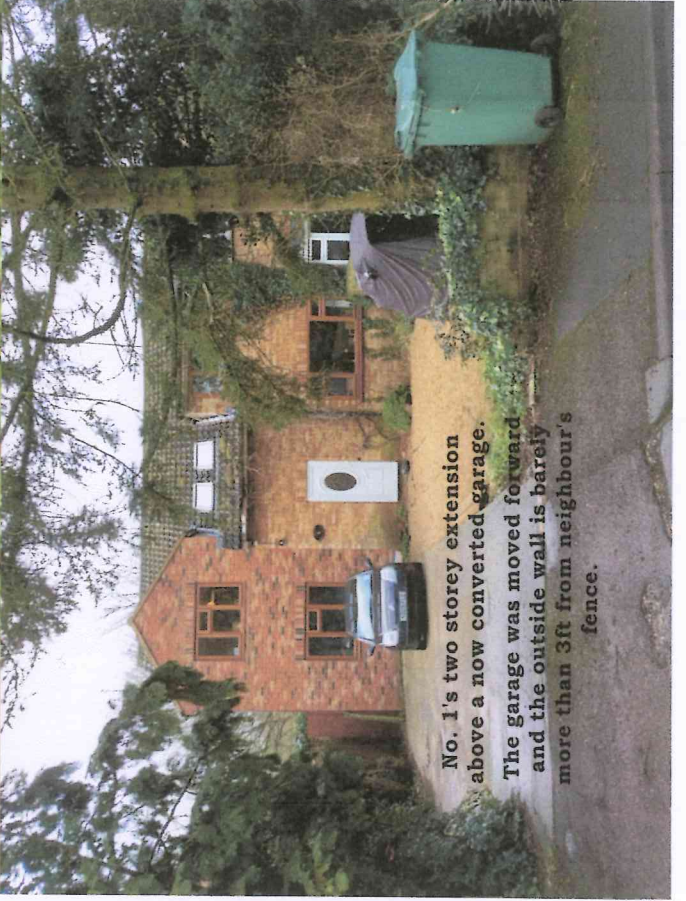


THE FIRS, once a very modest bungalow, now a new front and two storey extension.

No 4's first storey extension above garage that abuts onto no 5's boundary



7

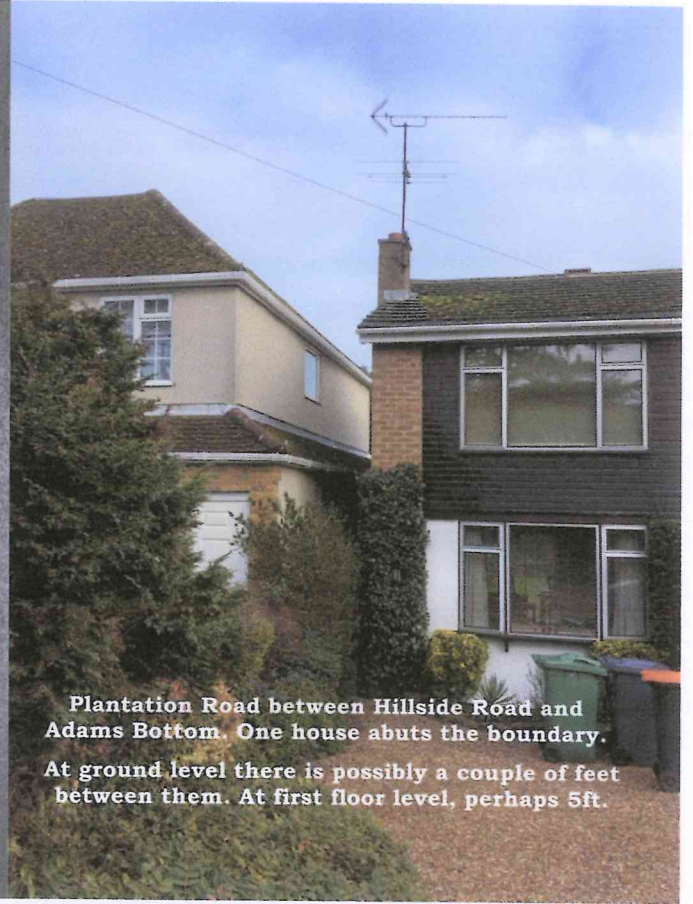


No. 1's two storey extension above a now converted garage. The garage was moved forward and the outside wall is barely more than 3ft from neighbour's fence.

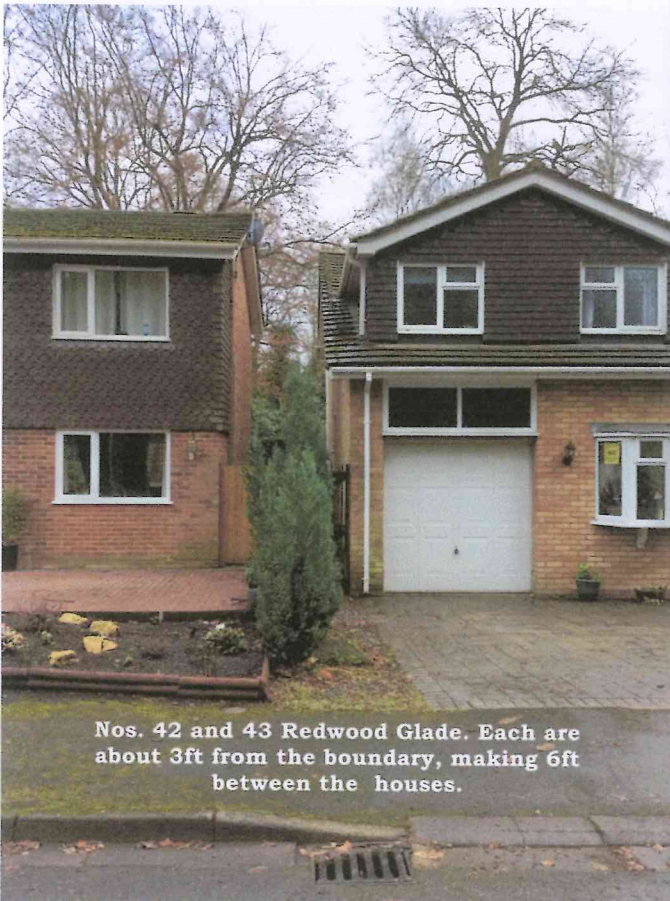
8



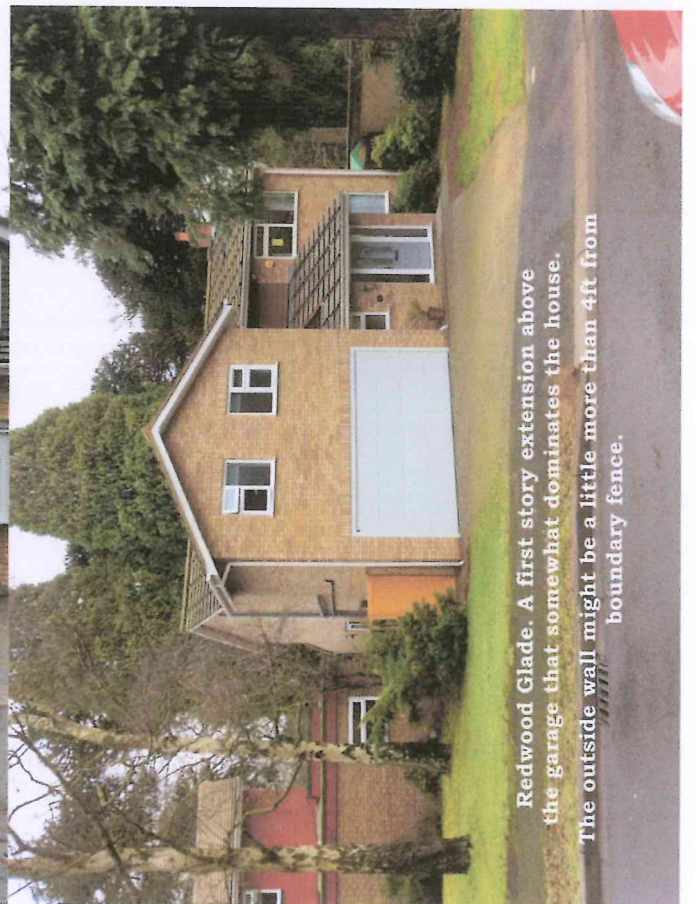
SILVER BIRCH on Plantation Road, with a new fascia built out at front. First floor extension above garage with outside wall 4ft from boundary fence. This house was dramatically transformed.



Plantation Road between Hillside Road and Adams Bottom. One house abuts the boundary. At ground level there is possibly a couple of feet between them. At first floor level, perhaps 5ft.



Nos. 42 and 43 Redwood Glade. Each are about 3ft from the boundary, making 6ft between the houses.



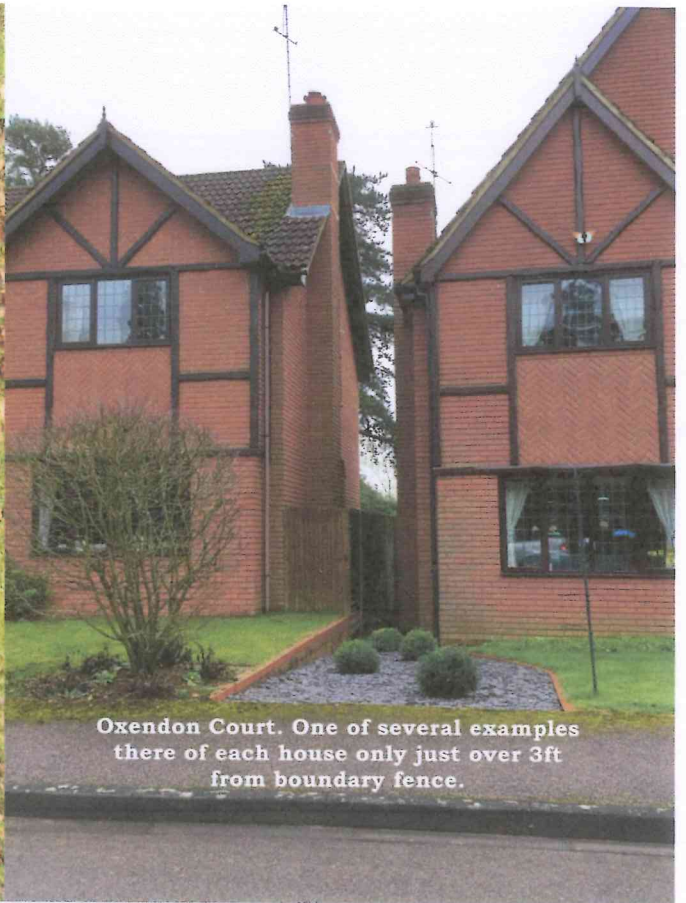
Redwood Glade. A first story extension above the garage that somewhat dominates the house. The outside wall might be a little more than 4ft from boundary fence.

13



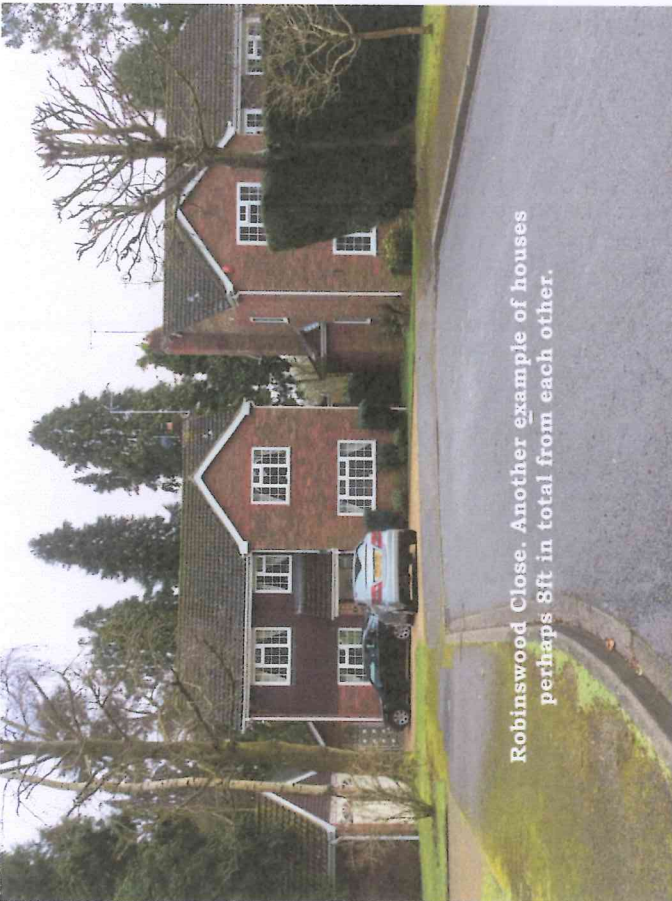
House in Taylor's Ride under renovation. The left hand side of the house is at most 3ft from fence

14



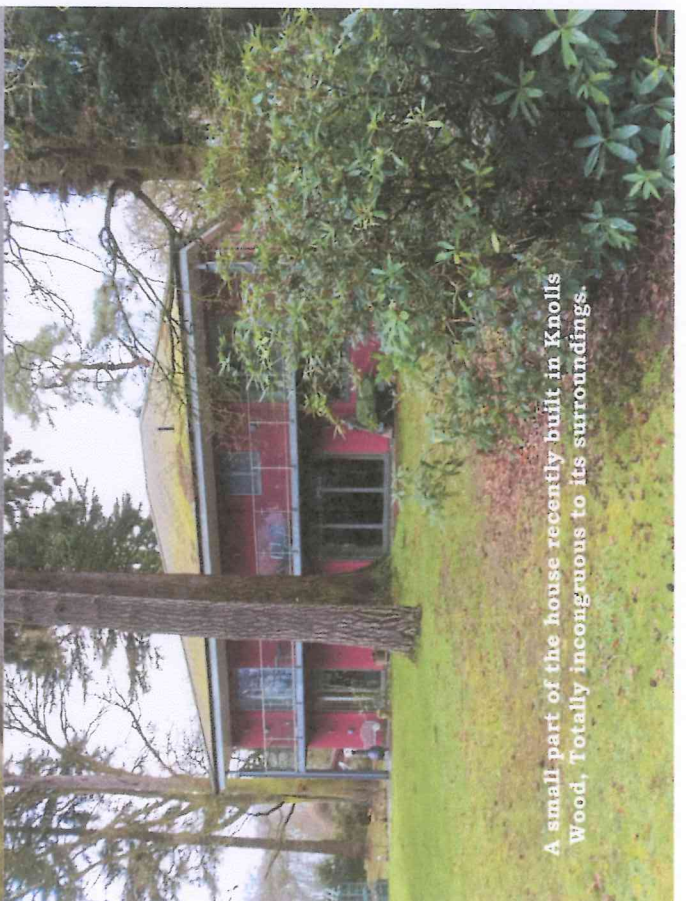
Oxendon Court. One of several examples there of each house only just over 3ft from boundary fence.

15



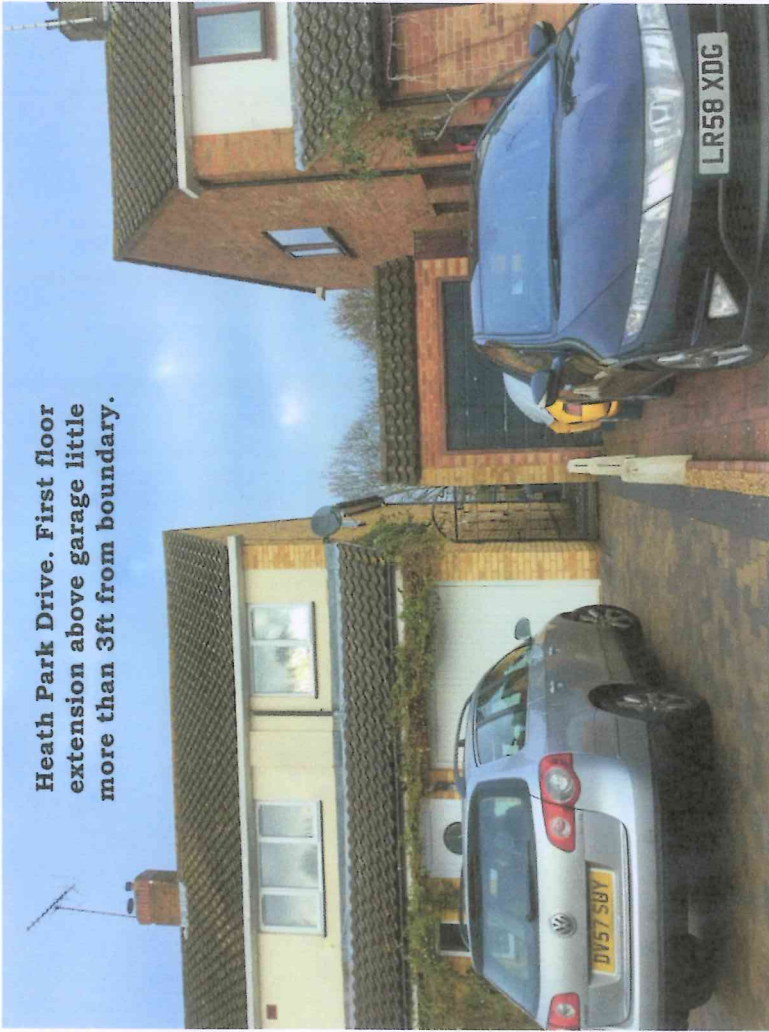
Robinswood Close. Another example of houses perhaps 8ft in total from each other.

16



A small part of the house recently built in Knolls Wood, Totally incongruous to its surroundings.

Heath Park Drive. First floor extension above garage little more than 3ft from boundary.



Heath Road. Single story extension above garage, that rather dominates house. Outside wall is very close to neighbour's boundary.



253, 255 and 257 Heath Road. Three houses possibly 7 or 8 ft in total from each other.

The house in the middle also has a first story, somewhat dominating, extension over the garage,

